

## Coins

# Hands-off policy, when caring for your collection

By Roger Boye

DAVID stores his collection of about 100 valuable coins in a large tin can—U. S. large cents made in the early 1800s, buffalo nickels, silver dollars, and even one large size U. S. dollar bill from the 1920s.

Sometimes, he'll shake the can to listen to the ring of his treasure. When showing the collection to friends, he touches the surface of every

coin as if trying to polish the numismatic keepsakes.

Unfortunately for David and many novice collectors like him, the value of a collection is diminished when it's treated with such neglect.

Valuable coins should be protected against becoming nicked or scratched. "Rare" coins should never be stored loose in a can, jar, or coin purse because the large silver dollar may nick the Indi-

an on the buffalo nickel beyond recognition.

Most collectors store their coins in coin folders or plastic tubes. Uncirculated or proof specimens are often kept in individual plastic holders.

Folders sold in most coin shops today include slots for all coins [every date and mint mark] made in a particular series. The folders come in many varieties, ranging in price from 40 cents for a

cardboard folder to several dollars for a folder made of sulphur-free material with clear plastic covering each coin.

In addition to protecting coins from nicks and scratches, folders will help to keep them free from foreign elements which could tarnish or discolor them. For example, sulphur will tarnish coins; for this reason, collectors will not keep coins in ordinary paper en-

velopes which have a high sulphur content.

Another important "don't" in the caring of coins is to never touch a valuable coin on the surface. Always grip it by the edge to prevent smudging the surface. Or use tongs or vinyl gloves when handling the coin. Also, tape should never be put on a coin because it will often leave an indelible smudge.

The collector who wants to

keep several coins in a series [but not try to obtain every coin in the series] may want to buy some small plastic tubes at a coin store. Those are made in several sizes to hold cents thru silver dollars.

Incidentally, coins should never be cleaned or polished. Cleaned coins, especially when cleaned by a novice, usually sell at a lower price.